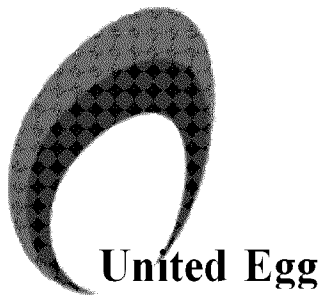


Exhibit E



United Voices

Gene Gregory – Editor

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS ISSUE

- * **Avian Influenza**
- * **Animal Care
Logo**
- * **Cage
Coonfiguration
& Feed Space**

Avian Influenza

For the first time in 20 years High Path H5N2 was found in the U.S. in a small broiler flock in Southeast Texas. The chickens, being grown for live markets in Houston were depopulated. Texas egg producers quickly monitored and upgraded their biosecurity. As of March 2nd, all commercial and non-commercial poultry farms within the 5-mile affected zone and the 10-mile surveillance zone were sampled for avian influenza and all samples tested negative. On March 2nd, a second round of surveillance testing began in the affected and surveillance zones.

A broiler breeder flock in British Columbia, Canada was confirmed positive for Low Path H7N3 on February 20th and was soon destroyed. The Pennsylvania layer complex found to have Low Path H2N2 remains under quarantine but the State has lifted the ban on egg shipments. Two broiler flocks with H7N2 in Delaware were destroyed.

Around the world as many as 41 countries banned poultry and egg products, either totally from the U.S. or from the states where the virus was isolated.

Low-Carb Diets

Harry Balzer, Vice President of the consumer marketing research firm, NPD Group has estimated there to be about 10 million Americans currently using some variation of a low-carb, high-protein diet. He further estimates that about 17% of U.S. adults have given low-carb eating a try.

The American Dietetic Association estimates the U.S. weight-loss industry is worth more than \$30 billion a year.

If we assume that Mr. Balzer is correct that 10 million people are currently on a low-carb, high-protein diet and if each of these people just increased their egg consumption for by (1) egg per week this would represent the additional sales of 833,333 dozen per week. This would require the dedicated production from nearly 2 million hens to supply this market. We all have friends and neighbors telling us that they have increased their egg consumption by several eggs per week. If each of the 10 million people increased their egg consumption by one (1) egg per day then we are looking at an increased consumption of nearly 195,000 cases (243 semi-loads) per week and requiring the dedicated production from nearly 14 million hens.

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Supply Demand

Things change quickly in the egg industry when we view time in a short period of one year. In mid-February 2003 Uner Barry's Midwest Large quote was at 75 cents per dozen and break even for many producers. United States Egg Marketers (USEM) sold an export order for delivery of 300 containers and the market immediately moved upward. This export set in motion what turned out to be the best year on record for egg producers.

The industry held off on expansion and watched an increasing demand, both from increasing people population and increasing egg consumption. The supply side was held in check with the implementation of animal welfare guidelines.

Now there are signs that bear watching. Cage manufacturers report brisk sales and the January hatch was up (one) 1 million pullets over January 2003 and nearly equal to January of 2002. Can we resist the temptation to expand too quickly? UEP and USEM can only do so much to help the industry be profitable. While both UEP and Don Bell have forecast extremely good prices for 2004, this can change quickly over the period of a year if producers don't watch for the warning signs.

Per Capita Egg Consumption

AEB has updated their per capita egg consumption figures through 2003. **Exciting news:** Per capita consumption has grown from 234.6 eggs in 1993 to 254.1 in 2003 – a growth of nearly 20 eggs per person over a 10-year period. Thanks AEB and ENC for the excellent job of telling consumers the positive story about eggs.

Initiative To Discredit Animal Care Certified Logo

Compassion Over Killing (COK) has increased its mission to discredit the Animal Care Certified program and logo as being false and misleading advertising. A video produced by (COK) depicting deplorable conditions in a layer house that was supposedly from an Animal Care Certified farm was aired by WPBF-TV in West Palm Beach, Florida on February 13th. The news reporter, made some very disparaging comments about the Animal Care Certified logo when introducing the segment.

Within a week, a reporter from a TV station in Baltimore was calling a local producer about the COK video. A search of the reporters past work pointed to reasons to believe that this reporter is an animal rights sympathizer.

We later learned that the West Palm Beach station is a member of the Hearst Corporation and the station had shared the story with its sister affiliates. Two other stations then aired the story on February 23rd in Cincinnati, Ohio and Louisville, Kentucky.

Letters have now been sent by UEP to the West Palm Beach station and other Hearst stations providing facts about the Animal Care Certified program. Among the comments made in the UEP letter are: *"The video footage aired was not representative of the Animal Care Certified program, contrary to what the viewer was lead to believe. Further, there is no documentation of where and when this footage was taken. It would be our hope that a journalist would check for the validity of materials being aired rather than take the word of an animal activists group with a set agenda."*

The video being distributed by COK was supposedly taken after COK members illegally broke into a Maryland egg farm more than a year ago.

All this points to the fact that all Animal Care Certified companies need to make sure they are fully implementing the Animal Husbandry Guidelines and are checking all their flocks daily. Someone with an agenda may be

watching. This also points to the importance of a strong public relations program. You have invested too much in the Animal Care Certified program to see it destroyed.

Speaking of public relations, it is gratifying to find that Animal Care Certified companies are quickly sending payment for the public relations invoices.

A New Friend In the Animal Welfare Issue

The National Animal Interest Alliance in Portland, Oregon may be a new friend of animal agriculture. Patti Strand, President of NAIA is on the board of the American Kennel Club and her interest started from the perspective of pets. It has expanded to include agriculture and industry as well. She and her husband authored a book "The Hijacking of the Humane Movement" and formed the NAIA Trust, which is a lobbying organization in Washington. They share their research with law enforcement agencies and provide it free to other organizations. NAIA is pushing to have the government revoke the 501c-3-tax status from PETA and similar activist groups. They have a grassroots following, with 42,000 names on an email list, representing every state. You may want to check out their website at www.naiaonline.org and possibly become a member.

Feed Prices

Feedstuffs reported in their February 23rd edition that nearby soybean futures sped to seven-year highs last week, spurred by concerns about a shrinking South American crop and a higher than expected January crush report.

The Chicago cash corn and Decatur cash soybean meal as reported on February 29 would increase feed for egg-laying hens by \$44.00 per ton over year earlier quotes. On average, this would increase the cost for eggs by about 7.5 cents per dozen.

OIE Conference On Animal Welfare

The OIE (The World Organization for Animal Health) held its first global conference in Paris on February 23-25 with people attending from over 60 countries. The OIE has previously only been involved in animal health issues but started to look at animal welfare in 2002 and now aims to create international animal welfare standards by late 2005. Attendees at the conference included academics, scientists, veterinarians and welfare groups. Although there was an element of producer representatives, this was at a low level, and producers had not been given the opportunity to be included on the program.

Source: IEC Newsletter.

Ohio Fresh Eggs Completes Purchase of Buckeye Egg Farm

Ohio Fresh Eggs has now purchased all farms previously owned by Buckeye Egg Farm and received operating permits from the State of Ohio. Fines of \$880,600.00 will be paid by Buckeye Egg Farm to settle the lawsuit brought by the U.S. EPA. Ohio Fresh Eggs will install an air filtration system to capture particulate matter at each of its barns at Marseilles and Mount Victory. Don Hershey, co-owner of Ohio Fresh Eggs says the company will spend \$1.6 million in pollution controls as part of the lawsuit settlement.

Ohio Fresh Eggs has already brought the Croton facilities into compliance with UEP's Animal Care Certified program and expects to have all facilities at other locations in compliance within the next few days.

Cage Configuration and Feeder Space

UEP's Animal Welfare Committee met in Chicago on March 3rd to discuss cage configuration and feeder space for new equipment and to consider whether more definitive recommendations are needed. Dr. Jeff Armstrong, Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee was on hand to provide background of how the Scientific Committee arrived at their recommendations. No conclusions or further recommendations were reached at this meeting, however the cage configuration and feeder space is now under further review and possible decision reached in the near future.

Representatives from USDA and ARPAS were also in attendance and shared their revisions to the audit guidelines that will take place with the second round of audits. Upon completion of final revisions, a copy of the audit guidelines will be sent to all Animal Care Certified companies.

Poultry Market Statistics

The 2003 USDA annual summary of "Poultry Market Statistics" has been issued and is now available to interested subscribers. The summary contains 102 pages of tabular data and a number of graphs and charts on monthly and yearly averages for prices reported in the egg market news reports. The annual summary includes cold storage holdings, egg movement reports, inventories, and weekly slaughter. The cost of the summary is \$25 for delivery within the U.S., Canada and Mexico; and \$30 for overseas subscriptions. It is available as a printed report, CD-Rom, or on diskette at the same cost. If you wish to receive the annual summary, contact the Poultry Market News office in Des Moines, Iowa at (515) 284-4471 or by fax at (515) 284-4468.

UEA Allied

With pleasure, we report that all UEA-Allied members except one have renewed their membership for 2004 and have paid their dues.

Wanted and For Sale

Wanted: Approximately 7,000 used 15-dozen wire egg baskets.

For Sale: Approximately 3,600 used wire baskets in good conditions.

Call Linda at the UEP-Iowa office at (563) 285-9100.

EASTER CHART

During the last 19 years this newsletter has recapped changes in some pre-Easter conditions. The prices are those quoted on the Thursday following the Monday Inventory date.

TABLE 1

2003	10-Mar	17-Mar	24-Mar	31-Mar	7-Apr	EASTER	21-Apr
Inventory (cs)							
Table Grade	958.2	1047.0	1162.1	1275.9	1286.0	933.2	676.5
% Change	0%	9%	11%	10%	1%	-26%	-28%
Breaking Stock	267.8	253.2	239.6	231.1	217.3	205.3	219.2
% Change	-5%	-5%	-5%	-4	-6	-4	7%
UEP Quotes							
GNR 1 – NE	54	54	54	54	53	53	46
GNR 1 – MW	53	54	54	53	52	52	43
GNR 1 – SC	56	57	56	56	55	55	50
GNR 1 – SE	53	53	53	52	53	55	48
U/B LG – NE	86	86	86	86	86	84	77
U/B LG – MW	84	85	85	85	85	81	74
U/B LG – SC	88	88	88	88	88	88	79
U/B LG – SE	84	84	84	85	87	87	79
U/B High							
NRBS EASTERN	39	39	39	39	39	39	39
NRBS CENTRAL	43	43	43	44	41	39	39

TABLE 2

2004	1 Mar	8 Mar	15 Mar	22 Mar	29 Mar	EASTER	12 Apr
Inventory (cs)							
Table Grade	952.1						
% Change	-1%						
Breaking Stock	224.3						
% Change	-10%						
UEP Quotes							
GNR 1 – NE	95						
GNR 1 – MW	98						
GNR 1 – SC	96						
GNR 1 – SE	100						
U/B LG – NE	126						
U/B LG – MW	123						
U/B LG – SC	126						
U/B LG – SE	127						
U/B High							
NRBS EASTERN	90						
NRBS CENTRAL	91						

February 10, 2004

Table Egg Layer Flock Projections 2003/04

Attached are the projections as of February 10, 2004 which include the January 1, 2004 USDA layer counts.

January 1, 2004 layer counts (279.5 million) were 2.2 million less than last year's count (281.7). The 12 month table egg layer count has averaged 276.3 million in 2003 vs 278.2 million in 2002 – a difference of 1.9 million fewer hens.

Replacements to be added in May of 2004 are expected to be 0.8 million more than year-earlier figures (15.3 vs. 14.5 million). The chick hatch in December of 2003 was up about 0.94 million pullets compared to 2002. The total hatch for 2003 was down 3.7 million pullet chicks from the previous year. Eggs in the incubators on January 1 were up 5.0% from the same time last year.

Current year-end expectations (2004) are for 282.3 million hens compared to 279.5 million in 2003. The December 2003 ending inventory was 2.3 million hens fewer than the number determined by reconciliation of slaughter, missing birds and the addition of new pullets – a 0.8% error.

USDA slaughter numbers in December totaled only 5.93 million birds – down 1.2 million from earlier projections. The missing category which includes mortality, destroyed birds, or those shipped alive into another country is currently estimated to be 8.61 million birds.

Our current (Feb 4, 2004) projection for egg prices for 2004 are:

	Jan *	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
So. Cal. Produc. Lg	88.6	82.1	86.0	82.8	68.0	76.3	74.4	86.1	79.5	81.1	98.0	95.8
MW UB Lg	120.3	115.7	121.4	113.2	104.1	110.1	113.4	119.5	114.9	119.5	132.9	129.3

Note: These are updated monthly with new hatch data. ***Current month projections are now adjusted to the latest month of actual prices.** Prices are based on the previous 2001 and 2002 hatch data and historical monthly price patterns (1999-03). New (2004) formulas are now being used for the first time including the year 2003 data. This has resulted in updates of previous projections. Non-historical circumstance can affect these projections (step up in exports, END depopulations, industry follow-through with animal welfare programs and other unpredictable occurrences).

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5:24 PM2/23/2004
bd#04USDA POULTRY STATISTICS (layers)
Actual Numbers 1/1/99 thru 2/1/04
Projected Numbers thru 12/31/04
(000,000 omitted)

PULLET	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL	% Change For Year	Avg.Per Month
CHICK HATCH															
1999	17.6	18.2	20.6	21.1	20.3	20.7	17.2	17.8	19.7	19.5	16.4	16.8	225.9	3.0%	18.8
2000	17.1	17.3	19.5	18.3	20.6	18.6	16.6	17.2	18.2	18.0	16.2	17.6	215.2	-5.0%	17.9
2001	18.4	18.9	20.5	21.4	21.3	20.4	19.3	17.5	18.6	17.9	16.2	15.9	226.3	4.9%	18.9
2002	17.8	17.2	18.5	19.0	19.4	17.6	17.8	17.8	17.9	16.1	15.6	16.0	210.7	-7.4%	17.6
2003	16.7	15.0	18.4	18.8	19.1	18.2	17.8	16.6	17.9	17.4	15.1	16.9	207.9	-1.3%	17.3
2004	17.7	16.7	18.9	19.0	19.5	18.5	18.3	17.0	18.2	17.5	15.6	17.0	213.9	2.8%	17.8
HEN SLAUGHTER															
1999	10.1	8.4	10.1	10.0	9.6	9.0	8.9	7.8	7.4	7.6	7.6	8.7	105.2	1.3%	8.8
2000	8.5	8.2	9.4	8.1	8.9	8.2	7.0	8.1	7.0	6.9	7.2	6.7	94.2	-11.7%	7.9
2001	8.4	7.5	8.7	7.4	7.5	7.7	6.5	7.7	6.9	8.3	7.2	7.8	91.6	-2.8%	7.6
2002	9.8	8.2	8.4	9.6	8.3	7.3	8.0	7.7	7.5	8.4	6.0	7.2	96.4	5.0%	8.0
2003	8.2	6.8	7.0	8.3	7.2	6.4	5.6	5.5	5.0	5.5	4.4	5.9	75.8	-27.2%	6.3
2004	5.5	4.9	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.0	5.0	68.4	-10.8%	5.7
LAYING HEN NUMBERS															
1999															
Begin No.Layers	263.3	263.1	263.8	261.4	260.6	259.9	260.5	260.0	262.6	265.4	268.4	270.8	263.3	76.0% Annual Rate	263.3
U.B. NE LG. Mkt.	83.6	73.0	79.0	63.4	62.8	58.4	72.2	70.9	65.9	60.0	71.2	68.9	69.1	73.8% Annual Rate	69.1
2000															
Begin No.Layers	269.9	270.1	271.4	270.6	266.7	265.8	265.9	267.3	267.5	270.0	271.7	275.4	269.4	***	269.4
Placements *	16.6	18.3	18.1	15.3	15.6	15.9	16.1	18.1	17.0	19.2	17.3	15.4	16.9	-1.8%	16.9
Slaughter	8.5	8.2	9.4	8.1	8.9	8.2	7.0	8.1	7.0	6.9	7.2	6.7	7.9	34.9%	7.9
Mortality **	7.9	8.8	9.5	11.1	7.6	7.6	7.7	9.8	7.5	10.6	6.4	10.0	8.7	38.8%	8.7
Ending No.Layers	270.1	271.4	270.6	266.7	265.8	265.9	267.3	267.5	270.0	271.7	275.4	274.1	269.7		269.7
U.B. NE LG. Mkt.	65.7	70.4	64.2	72.0	57.0	67.7	65.4	76.0	70.4	76.4	84.9	98.4	72.4		72.4
2001															
Begin No.Layers	274.1	276.3	276.5	278.2	276.8	273.6	272.8	273.3	275.5	278.6	279.5	280.3	276.3	***	276.3
Placements *	16.0	16.9	16.7	15.1	16.4	17.1	17.6	19.1	19.9	19.8	19.0	17.9	17.6	4.2%	17.6
Slaughter	8.4	7.5	8.7	7.4	7.5	7.7	6.5	7.7	6.9	8.3	7.2	7.8	7.6	33.1%	7.6
Mortality **	5.4	9.2	6.3	9.1	12.1	10.2	10.6	9.2	9.9	10.6	11.0	8.6	9.3	40.6%	9.3
Ending No.Layers	276.3	276.5	278.2	276.8	273.6	272.8	273.3	275.5	278.6	279.5	280.3	281.8	276.9		276.9
U.B. NE LG. Mkt.	79.5	75.0	83.1	77.9	61.6	60.8	63.3	66.3	65.0	69.4	74.9	70.6	70.6		70.6
2002															
Begin No.Layers	281.8	280.4	279.7	278.5	276.8	275.6	277.7	278.5	280.0	282.3	282.9	283.3	279.8	70.8% Annual Rate	279.8
Placements *	16.3	17.3	16.6	15.1	14.8	16.6	16.0	17.2	17.7	18.0	16.4	16.6	16.5	-6.2%	16.5
Slaughter	9.8	8.2	8.4	9.6	8.3	7.3	8.0	7.7	7.5	8.4	6.0	7.2	8.0	34.5%	8.0
Mortality **	7.9	9.8	9.4	7.2	7.7	7.2	7.2	8.0	7.9	9.0	10.0	10.6	8.5	36.4%	8.5
Ending No.Layers	280.4	279.7	278.5	276.8	275.6	277.7	278.5	280.0	282.3	282.9	283.3	282.1	279.8		279.8
U.B. NE LG. Mkt.	75.9	66.6	83.2	61.8	59.3	72.0	70.1	73.3	70.0	70.9	90.0	83.1	73.0		73.0
2003															
Begin No.Layers	282.1	282.0	280.1	279.7	276.2	275.4	274.8	276.2	276.9	276.9	279.3	282.4	278.5	70.2% Annual Rate	278.5
Placements *	16.6	16.6	15.0	14.5	14.9	15.5	14.0	17.1	17.5	17.8	16.9	16.6	16.1	-2.8%	16.1
Slaughter	8.2	6.8	7.0	8.3	7.2	6.4	5.6	5.5	5.0	5.5	4.4	5.9	6.3	27.2%	6.3
Mortality **	8.5	11.7	8.4	9.7	8.5	9.7	6.9	10.9	12.5	9.9	9.4	13.6	10.0	43.0%	10.0
Ending No.Layers	282.0	280.1	279.7	276.2	275.4	274.8	276.2	276.9	276.9	279.3	282.4	279.5	278.3		278.3
U.B. NE LG. Mkt.	83.4	80.1	86.0	83.0	73.7	82.9	87.0	99.8	101.0	105.8	128.4	115.3	93.9		93.9
PROJECTED 2004															
Begin No.Layers	279.5	279.8	281.0	281.2	278.3	276.5	275.5	274.5	276.1	277.7	280.4	283.1	278.6	68.7% Annual Rate	278.6
Placements *	15.4	16.6	16.2	14.0	15.7	16.5	15.5	17.6	17.7	18.1	17.2	17.0	16.5	2.5%	16.5
Slaughter	5.5	4.9	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.0	5.0	5.7	24.5%	5.7
Mortality **	9.6	10.5	10.0	11.0	11.5	11.5	10.5	10.0	10.0	9.5	9.5	9.5	10.3	44.2%	10.3
Ending No.Layers	279.8	281.0	281.2	278.3	276.5	275.5	274.5	276.1	277.7	280.4	283.1	285.6	279.1		279.1
U.B. NE LG. Mkt.	120.5	113.0											116.8	2 Mos. Mkt.	116.8

* Pullet placements in laying house are computed as 93% of pullet hatch reported five months earlier.

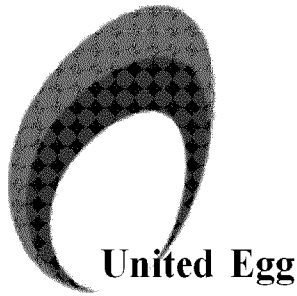
** Mortality - Includes, hen house mortality, fire loss, theft, unreported disposal, and mysterious disappearance.

*** Top % is change in 20 wk old pullets housed vs previous year, 2nd is slaughter as a % of laying flock size, and the 3rd is mortality & disappearance as a % of laying flock size.

MONTHLY DISAPPEARANCE
(Millions)

<u>2004</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Total</u>
U.S. Slaughter	5.5												
Canadian Slaughter	1.2												
Rendering and Other	6.0												
Normal Mortality	<u>2.4</u>												
Actual Total	15.1												
Estimated	15.1	15.4	16.0	17.0	17.5	17.5	16.5	16.0	16.0	15.5	14.5	14.5	191.5
Total for 2004 (02-23-04)													

RKL/lcw
2-24-04



Washington Report

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HPAI in Texas. UEA Urges Ag Secretary On Trade

A flock of approximately 7,000 broilers in Southeast Texas (in Gonzalez county, about 50 miles East of San Antonio) have tested positive at National Veterinary Services Laboratory, the national reference laboratory, for **High Path H5N2 avian influenza**. This is the first time in 20 years that HPAI has been detected in the United States, and set off a flurry of conference calls and emails between UEP/UEA and the Federal government, UEP Board, Government Relations Committee, and UEA Further Processors Division. It also erected trade barriers around the world.

UEA sent an urgent letter to Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman urging immediate communication with Japan that unpublished data is available from the Agriculture Research Service demonstrating inactivation of AI by normal pasteurization temperatures. The letter noted that 41 countries had banned US poultry and eggs either totally or from the selected States costing the industries more than \$100 million. At the same time, UEA Vice President Ken Klippen urged Rep. Tom Latham (R-IA) to include the importance of publishing this data in the proceedings of the FY 05 budget hearings with Ag Secretary Veneman.

What should I tell my customers or media if asked about AI?

- The strain of HPAI in the US is different from the Asian variety (H5N1). It is also different from the strain that occurred in Hong Kong in 1997 (H5N1) or in the Netherlands in 2003 (H7N7).
- The Center for Disease Control has stated there has never been reported a human health risk associated with the strain now in the US.

UEP Responds to ACC Logo Attack

In a televised interview, UEP's Vice President Ken Klippen responded to a hostile investigative reporter for an ABC-affiliate news station in West Palm Beach, Florida that attacked the use of the Animal Care Certified logo. Armed with "secret videotapes" of a break-in at an egg facility by Compassion Over Killing, the reporter's bias was evident in the phrasing of the questions she posed to Klippen. This type of interview underscores the importance of a public relations campaign authorized by the UEP Board in January.

UEP Meets with FDA Over Salmonella

In a meeting with the FDA Director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, Dr. Bob Brackett, along with the Deputy Director Lou Carson, UEP's Al Pope and Ken Klippen, and ENC's Dr. Hilary Shallo Thesmar were updated on outbreaks and cases of *Salmonellosis* associated with eggs. The goal of the former President's food safety initiative was to reduce the incidence by 50% by the year 2005, but based on the information presented at the meeting, *Salmonellosis* is still occurring.

UEA Elects New Officers

At the recent UEA Board of Directors meeting in Washington, DC, Toby Catherman, Michael Foods, was elected Chairman; Dan Meagher, Moark, is Vice Chairman; Jerry Warntjes, Echo Lake, was named Treasurer; Steve Stewart, ADF, is EggPAC Chairman.

UEA Elects Executive Committee

The UEA Board of Directors at their meeting in Washington, DC, elected a new Executive Committee composed of UEA Officers, Toby Catherman, Chairman; Dan Meagher, Vice Chairman; Jerry Warntjes, Treasurer; and two other directors, Elliot Gibber, Deb-EL Foods and Norm Stocker, Cargill.

UEA Board Asks For Membership Email

With the need for faster communication, especially with the news about Avian Influenza, UEA is asking the membership to forward their email addresses (other than those who have done so while attending the UEA Board meeting on the 18th) to the Washington Office: CCchapman@mwmlaw.com

UEA Schedules Meeting at Uner Barry

The UEA Further Processors Division will hold its Board of Directors meeting in conjunction with the Uner Barry Conference at Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 27, 2004 from 7 – 9 am.

Ranking Senator Addresses Egg Imports From Mexico

Senator Grassley (R-IA) and Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee spoke on his ag radio show recently about the egg imports coming in from Mexico. The UEP Washington team briefed the Senator's staff prior to the airing. Over 20 radio stations cover the radio show across the Midwest and Arkansas. Here are some of the excerpts that will certainly get the attention of the USDA

- It's my understanding that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has completed work with Mexican officials to develop a certification process for the entry of shell eggs for the table market from two Mexican states, Sonora and Sinaloa.
- The lack of sanitary conditions and refrigeration throughout much of Mexico causes me concern about the possible covert trans-shipment of eggs from other Mexican states through the eligible states of Sonora and Sinaloa. Such trans-shipments would, of course, be prohibited by APHIS regulations.
- As Iowa leads the country in egg production, it's important that we stay on top of the APHIS enforcement of sanitary regulations concerning eggs
- For that reason I'm sending letters to Undersecretary for Food Safety Dr. Elsa Murano and Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Bill Hawks requesting information describing the efforts being made by USDA to monitor potential egg imports for the table market from Mexico.
- In order to protect the U.S. egg industry from disease, it is critically important to ensure that imports occur in strict conformity with U.S. regulations.

UEP Briefs Farm Bureau on Egg Issues

In a conference call with the poultry committee to the American Farm Bureau Federation, UEP Vice President Ken Klippen briefed its members on the issues confronting the egg industry. This included AI, animal welfare, national animal identification program, ADOL, restricted feed use of specified risk materials, and the Safe Harbor Agreement.

UEP Seeks Funding For AI Program

Following the decision by the UEP Board of Directors in January, the Washington Team has starting asking Congressional support for a Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza line item of \$25 million, incorporating all of the components of the Administration's \$13 million request, but with additional funds for indemnities and appropriate State surveillance costs, as well as to enhance certain aspects of the basic \$13 million request, such as additional vaccine acquisition. Several visits to Members of the House Agriculture Appropriations Committee have been already made. The National Chicken Council and National Turkey Federation are joining UEP in this request.

UEP/UEA Appointed To Be Appointed as Codex Delegate

When the 36th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene meets in Washington, DC, March 29-April 3; UEP/UEA's Vice President Ken Klippen has asked to be appointed by FDA as a delegate to the proceedings. He had joined the drafting committee composed of FDA and FSIS in Brussels last November, and as reported by the FDA Team Leader to the UEA Further Processors Division Board Meeting recently, he played an instrumental role in voicing the concerns and objectives of the egg industry during the proceedings (See Washington Report 11-24-03).

FDA Commissioner To Leave

UEP has learned that Dr. Mark McClellan will be resigning as Commissioner of FDA. President Bush will be nominating him to head the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

FSIS Administrator Leaves

Dr. McKee is stepping down as FSIS Administrator. He has spent his lifetime in Oklahoma and Wyoming, and his family is in that area and he wants to return to the West. Dr. Elsa Murano, Under Secretary for Food Safety expressed her gratitude for his service as Administrator of FSIS. Dr. McKee will not be leaving the Agency, but will be taking a position as Science Advisor to the Technical Service Center, and he will be moving to Omaha. Dr. Barbara Masters has been named Acting Administrator, and will serve until a new Administrator is recruited. Dr. Ken Petersen will move up to become Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Field Operations.

Atkins Under Attack

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) has for years opposed Dr. Robert Atkins' low carb-/high-fat/high-protein approach to losing weight. (PCRM is a vegan group). Dr. Atkins died last April from complications from a fall. Recently, in a highly reported move, PCRM made public his private medical records, which showed he weighed 258 pounds at the time of his death, obese by government standards. PCRM was quick to imply that Dr. Atkins' own diet did him in. In reality, Atkins suffered from cardiomyopathy, a weakening of the heart muscle sometimes caused by a virus. The condition was not related to his diet. He reportedly weighed a fit 198 pounds on admission to the hospital when he fell, and gained 60 pounds from IV fluids he was given there in the eight days before he died.

Of interest is how the media responded to PCRM's attempts to ruin the reputation of the late Dr. Atkins. NBC science correspondent Robert Bazell called PCRM on its agenda, referring to it as "a pro-vegetarian animal rights group." Dozens of other broadcast and print outlets followed his lead.

On the CBS Evening News, anchor Dan Rather pointed out that the man "is dead and cannot speak for himself," before turning the coverage over to medical correspondent Elizabeth Kaledin, who noted that "The sense is that in this case, foes of Robert Atkins would have been wiser to stick to a rule of many successful weight loss plans: sometimes having a little good taste is better than having no taste at all."

Newsweek has a "inside story" on the release of the medical records. It notes that The Atkins Foundation and Dr. Atkins' widow may decide to sue PCRM, and adds: "If Atkins' associates do sue PCRM, things could get a lot uglier. Less than 5 percent of PCRM's members are physicians. And Barnard has co-signed letters, on PCRM letterhead, with the leader of Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, an animal-rights group the Department of Justice calls a "domestic terrorist threat." PCRM also has ties to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. An agency called the Foundation to Support Animal Protection has distributed money from PETA to PCRM in the past and, until very recently, did both groups' books. Barnard and PETA head Ingrid Newkirk are both on the foundation's board." <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4271856/>

Secretary Veneman Publicly Notes Americans Overweight

Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman addressed the Agricultural Outlook Forum recently with the sobering news that 65 percent of Americans today are overweight or obese. Of that total, 31 are obese, which is double the rate from the year 1980 and another 34 percent fall into the category of overweight. The number of severely obese people has increased 300 percent since 1986.

While obesity harms our health it also is translating into high financial and social costs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that obesity cost the US economy \$117 billion in the year 2000, \$61 billion in direct medical costs, and \$56 billion in lost productivity. The Secretary noted that between 1980 and 1999, total milk consumption declined an average of 15 percent per person; egg consumption declined 8 percent; and red meat consumption declined about 10 percent.

From 1980 to 2000 average annual fruit consumption rose 4 percent. Vegetable consumption rose 26 percent but frozen fries, potato chips and iceberg lettuce made up a third of the total vegetable servings. Consumption of grain products by the year 2000 had increased by more than a third over the early 1980s. However, less than one serving per day came from whole grains, far short of the recommended number of whole grain servings.

And average consumption of sugar and caloric sweeteners increased 24 percent in the same period. The CDC found that between 1971 and 2000 women increased their calorie intake by 22 percent and men by 7 percent. A recent comparison of actual consumption to National Academy of Sciences nutrition standards found that both men and women are eating about twice as much added sugars and solid fats as recommended. Men are eating less than half the recommended fruit servings, and only about one-fifth of the dark-green vegetables recommended.

As scientific experts prepare the next edition of the dietary guidelines, noted the Secretary, we have an opportunity to learn from the past 20 years and do a better job on the nutrition education part of that process. Along with updating the guidelines, USDA is reviewing the food guide pyramid, the educational symbol that goes along with the guidelines.